



# NPDB-HIPDB



## DATA BANK NEWS



National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

JANUARY 2006

### Ongoing Registration Renewal

Registration renewal is underway for all entities and agents registered with the Data Banks before July 1, 2005. The Data Banks are currently sending notification by U.S. Postal Service letter and through on-line Data Bank Correspondence describing this process. Entities are required to update their registration information via the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) upon notice.

When renewing, entities must ensure that their statutory authority information is correct and that they meet the legal requirements to use the Data Banks. Also, all contact information should be reviewed to ensure that it is accurate. If an entity fails to renew its registration during the specified renewal period, then the Data Banks will deactivate that entity's Data Bank Identification Number (DBID). The entity will not be able to conduct business with the Data Banks until it renews its registration. The registration renewal process is scheduled to be completed by June 2006.

#### Inside this issue

Ongoing Registration Renewal.....	1
Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: The Data Banks' Response.....	1
Upcoming Enhancements to the Historical Query and Report Summary Service.....	2
Data Bank Web Site: FAQs Page.....	2
The Querying and Reporting XML Service (QXRS) Simplifies Reporting for Frequent Reporters .....	3
Data Bank Meeting Summaries.....	3
User Feedback Results in Entity-Agent Improvements .....	4
Helpful Hints from the Data Banks.....	4
Security Hints from the Data Banks .....	6
Updated Interactive Training Data Bank Programs .....	6
Dear Data Banks .....	7
On the Horizon.....	8

### Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: The Data Banks' Response

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, there was an outpouring of health care volunteers from around the nation who offered their professional expertise to assist their Gulf Coast colleagues and the people they serve.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recognized the need to verify the credentials of health care practitioners prior to deploying them to deliver professional care to victims of the hurricanes. The Department understands that the information in the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) provides a baseline of information for credentialing health care professionals in the shortest possible time. (Currently, the all-electronic Data Banks have a query response time of only two to four hours.) HHS authorized a credential verification organization to act as its agent, and began to channel the names of volunteers through the Data Banks. During the next few weeks over 4,600 practitioners and providers were "vetted" using NPDB and HIPDB queries at no charge. In the process, these health care practitioners were made temporary HHS employees and were brought under the umbrella of the *Federal Torts Claim Act* during their deployment.

*See Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: The Data Banks' Response on page 7*

# Upcoming Enhancements to the Historical Query and Report Summary Service

In a continuing effort to improve the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS), the Data Banks plan to enhance the historical query and report summary functionality on May 8, 2006.

- **EXPANDED SEARCHABLE DATE RANGE.** Currently, an IQRS user can search on queries and reports submitted within the last four years. As a result of IQRS User Review Panel (URP) meeting recommendations, the IQRS historical query and report date range will be extended, enabling users to search queries and reports submitted from June 2000 to the present.
- **EXPANDED SEARCH CRITERIA.** Currently, users can search for queries and reports they have submitted by subject type, subject name, submission date range, query (or report) status (e.g., completed, rejected), and type of report (e.g., Adverse Action Report [AAR], Medical Malpractice Payment Report [MMPR]). Beginning in May 2006, users will be able to search on licensure information, Social Security Number (SSN), and Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) for historical reports on individuals and Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN) for historical reports on organizations. Beginning in May 2006, users will also be able to search on Submitter User ID and licensure information for individual and organization historical queries.
- **ADDED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SORT OPTIONS.** Also in May, a new feature on the *Historical Query Summary* and the *Historical Report Summary* screens will allow users to select primary and secondary sort options when searching on historical queries and reports submitted from June 2000 to the present. Users may sort by all searchable fields, as well as Bill Reference Number (historical queries only), Batch DCN (historical queries only), Completed/Rejected Status and Active/Inactive Status (historical reports only). **Note:** Specialty is shown only for physicians and dentists and only for Adverse Action Reports. For additional information, users may click the expanded detail links on-screen.

These upcoming enhancements are a direct result of user feedback received at past IQRS URP meetings. Thank you for helping to improve the Data Banks. ¶

## Data Bank Web Site: FAQs Page

Have you ever had a question about how to use a particular feature of the Data Bank Web site? Ever had a question about how the dispute process works? The Data Banks Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are located on the Web site under the FAQs heading at the very top of the home page, located at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com).

The FAQs page addresses popular user questions on what it means to dispute a report, how to designate an authorized agent to submit queries on behalf of your entity, whether you need to enter credit card information each time you submit a query, and more. The information is grouped by the most frequently-asked-about topics, which include:

- Dispute Process.
- Data Bank Information and the General Public.
- Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS).
- Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP).
- IQRS Subject Database Import.
- Miscellaneous (How to Update an Entity Profile, How to Designate an Agent).
- Registration.
- Querying.
- Reporting.
- Self-Querying.

Check out the FAQs page on the Data Bank Web site to be a better informed Data Bank user! ¶

## The Querying and Reporting XML Service (QRXS) Simplifies Reporting for Frequent Reporters

The Querying and Reporting XML Service (QRXS), available since July 2005, accepts all report types and serves as an alternative to the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) and the Interface Control Document (ICD) Transfer Program (ITP). The QRXS and ITP are for reporters who use their own transaction processing systems to store reportable events.

The QRXS interface offers a variety of advantages over ITP and the IQRS:

- The QRXS can be integrated into existing computer systems so that report data can be submitted directly to the Data Banks, reducing data entry effort.
- The QRXS provides real-time rejection notifications, eliminating the need for users to wait two to four hours for validation responses.
- The QRXS submission and response formats are much easier to update than ITP when the Data Banks add new features to the service.

- The QRXS enables users to verify that report data is complete and formatted correctly prior to submission, making it easier to submit reports.
- The QRXS response files can be more easily formatted into readable response documents than ITP response files.
- The QRXS is much easier to integrate into existing computer systems than ITP.
- The QRXS uses the industry-standard eXtensible Markup Language (XML) format for submission and response data.

In the future, the QRXS will expand to support queries and provide additional features. New QRXS users are encouraged to contact the NPDB-HIPDB Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732 prior to using the QRXS interface. For more information about the QRXS, go to [www.npdb-hipdb.com/qrxs.html](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com/qrxs.html).

## Data Bank Meeting Summaries

### INTEGRATED QUERYING AND REPORTING SERVICE (IQRS) USER REVIEW PANEL (URP) MEETING

The IQRS URP meeting convened on November 9, 2005, in Fairfax, Virginia. Periodically, the URP meets in different locations around the United States to serve as a forum for users to provide feedback about Data Bank operations and suggestions on how to improve the system. This forum included participants from California, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Topics discussed at the recent meeting included:

- Recent system improvements.
- Future system improvements.
- Data Bank security.
- Ongoing periodic registration renewal.
- Data Bank compliance activities.

The Data Banks strive to ensure that the IQRS remains valuable and user-friendly. The information obtained from the URP assists the Data Banks in reaching that goal. See the articles entitled "Upcoming Enhancements

to the Historical Query and Report Summary Service" and "User Feedback Results in Entity-Agent Improvements" (pages 2 and 4, respectively, of this newsletter) to read about upcoming system improvements that are the result of URP input.

### NPDB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The NPDB Executive Committee met on November 17, 2005, at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The Committee is composed of representatives of licensing board associations, professional societies, medical malpractice organizations, consumer groups, accrediting bodies, and other NPDB stakeholders. The Committee meets twice a year to provide guidance to the NPDB contractor, SRA International, Inc. (SRA). Highlights from the November meeting include:

- Status reports on NPDB operations presented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS') Practitioner Data Banks Branch (PDBB) and SRA.

*See Data Bank Meeting Summaries on page 8*

# User Feedback Results in Entity-Agent Improvements

In May 2006, the Data Banks will introduce several upgrades to enhance the entity-agent system functionality. The improvements are a result of feedback obtained from past Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) User Review Panel (URP) meetings and are highlighted below:

## Entity Administrators May Specify an Agent's Querying and Reporting Privileges

IQRS users expressed a desire for more control over their relationships with their designated authorized agents. Currently, a designated agent is provided the same querying and reporting privileges as the entity it represents. Beginning in May, entities that have both querying and reporting privileges may authorize an agent acting on their behalf to query only, report only, or query and report. To update the privileges for an agent designated to query and/or report, the entity must update the "Allow Agent to" field on the *Designate Authorized Agent* screen. **Note:** The entity's privileges define the designated agent's

privileges. For example, if your entity is not authorized to query, the agent designated to your entity will not be able to query on your behalf.

## Easy IQRS Login for Authorized Agents

Upon logging in to the IQRS, agents may select from a list on the *Agent Registration Confirmation* screen the entity name on whose behalf they are authorized to work. **Note:** If the agent is authorized to act on its own behalf, the agent may highlight **Act on Behalf of Self**. This will improve the current system, which at present requires agents to manually enter the Data Bank Identification Number (DBID) of the entity on whose behalf they are submitting a query or report.

## Agent Administrators May Specify User Querying and Reporting Privileges

Additional improvements released in May will include: agent administrators may use the IQRS to designate querying and reporting privileges to their authorized users. This new feature will allow agent administrators to proactively restrict their users'

ability to log in to the IQRS (and submit queries and/or reports) on behalf of certain entities. An agent administrator will be able to specify, for instance, that a particular User ID may only submit queries on behalf of a particular entity. In order to effect a change in querying/reporting privileges for a user for your entity, highlight the User ID on the *Maintain User Account* screen and click **Edit**. On the *User Account Information* screen, locate the "Entities Available To Act On Behalf Of" section, and highlight the users for whom you wish to modify privileges. Next, click **Query Only**, **Report Only**, **Query & Report**, or **None** depending on the type of privileges that you want the user to have for the particular entity relationship. When the agent administrator creates a new user account, by default, the user is assigned no privileges unless the administrator manually updates the user's privileges. Remember to click **Save** after making any changes on the *User Account Information* screen. **Note:** Relationships in place before

*Continued on page 5*

# Helpful Hints From

## 30-DAY VIEWING PERIOD FOR IQRS QUERY RESPONSES

In most cases, IQRS query responses are available within two to four hours of submission for 30 days. Once the 30-day period expires, query responses will no longer be available for viewing in the IQRS. If you are unable to view a query response immediately, you may print out a hard copy or save the query response file to your computer's hard drive for later use.

## USING THE EXTENSIBLE MARKUP LANGUAGE (XML) SUBJECT IMPORT OPTION

Has your entity considered importing subject data to the IQRS using XML format? There are advantages to using XML over the fixed-width import option. XML import format offers flexible features to import and

maintain subject information in the IQRS. Users can automatically add, update, and delete both individual and organization subjects. Fixed-width format files cannot import organization subjects, nor can entities update existing subjects or delete existing subjects using fixed-width. XML also provides a Subject ID data element, allowing users to easily track subjects with a unique identifying number during the import process. To obtain information on using XML for formatting files for import into the IQRS, go to [www.npdb-hipdb.com/iqrsSubjectDatabase.html](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com/iqrsSubjectDatabase.html).

## VIEW NPDB-HIPDB REPORT CODES BEFORE SUBMITTING REPORTS

The Data Bank report codes are listed on the Data Bank's Web site at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com) to aid entities in filing reports. A reporter can view the report codes to



User Feedback Results in... from page 4

May 8, 2006 will continue to hold current privileges (i.e., agents will be able to query and report on behalf of an entity that can query and report, and all staff working for an agent will be able to submit queries and/or reports on all entities on whose behalf the agent operates).

### New Active Entity Relationships Screen for Agent Administrators

Beginning in May, an agent administrator may click **View Entity Relationships** on the *Administrator Options* screen to display the new *Active Entity Relationships* screen (Figure 1). This screen displays details pertaining to all of the authorized agent's active entity relationships and the users that the agent's administrator has authorized to act on behalf of each entity.

The Data Banks always appreciate user feedback and are constantly striving to make the Data Banks as user-friendly as possible. We hope you will find the upcoming improvements helpful. ¶

ACTIVE ENTITY RELATIONSHIPS			
The following table details your active entity relationships and the users that you have authorized to act on behalf of each entity.			
<a href="#">Hide All Details</a>			
<b>Entity Name:</b>	IMAGINARY UNDERWRITING AGENCIES LTD (LONDON, ENGLAND)		
<b>Start Date:</b>	05/11/2003	<b>DBID:</b>	XXXXG4
<b>Output Routed:</b>	Agent	<b>EFT Acct Charged:</b>	Entity
<b>Authorized To:</b>	QRY & RPT		
<b>Authorized Users:</b>	administrator can QRY & RPT joetownson (Joe Townson) can QUERY ONLY		
<a href="#">Hide Authorized Users</a>			
<b>Entity Name:</b>	FAKE HEALTH PLAN (NEWARK, NJ)		
<b>Start Date:</b>	06/05/2005	<b>DBID:</b>	XXXX55
<b>Output Routed:</b>	Agent	<b>EFT Acct Charged:</b>	Entity
<b>Authorized To:</b>	QRY & RPT		
<b>Authorized Users:</b>	administrator can QRY & RPT redshoward (Howard Reds) can QUERY ONLY		
<a href="#">Hide Authorized Users</a>			
<b>Entity Name:</b>	NOT A REAL HOSPITAL (FAIRFAX, VA)		
<b>Start Date:</b>	06/01/2005	<b>DBID:</b>	XXXX11
<b>Output Routed:</b>	Agent	<b>EFT Acct Charged:</b>	Entity
<b>Authorized To:</b>	QRY & RPT		
<b>Authorized Users:</b>	administrator can QRY & RPT yelterk (Kate Yelter) can QRY & RPT		
<a href="#">Hide All Details</a>			
<a href="#">Return to Administrator Options</a>			

Figure 1. The new Active Entity Relationships screen enables agent administrators to easily view information pertaining to their entity relationships and their assigned user privileges.

# The Data Banks

assist with determining the appropriate code before submitting an actual report. Links to the codes for all report types (i.e., Adverse Action, Medical Malpractice Payment, Judgment or Conviction) are listed on the screen.

### ACCESS BROCHURES AND FACT SHEETS ON THE DATA BANK HOME PAGE!

Do you need to know how to use a particular feature of the IQRS? Would you like information on the Data Banks to provide to your practitioners? Informational Fact Sheets and Data Bank brochures are available for viewing and printing at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com). Under the Publications heading, select **Brochures and Fact Sheets** to access this information.

### UPDATE YOUR ENTITY PROFILE AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY

Remember to update your entity profile when significant changes occur within your organization, such as a merger or acquisition, location change, or point of contact change. The administrator of an entity or agent should report profile changes on-line through the IQRS. To make changes to a profile after logging in to the IQRS, select **Update Profile** on the *Administrator Options* screen to update your entity's profile information. ¶

# Security Hints from the Data Banks

**B**ecause the Internet is an integral part of our lives for conducting business and managing personal activities, users must be aware of a potential threat that can be unintentionally installed on computers – “spyware.” Spyware is designed to invade your privacy, bombard your computers with pop-up windows, and slow down or cause your entity’s computers to crash by changing their Internet behavior. Your success in eliminating spyware will depend on education, common sense, and a focus on prevention.

Spyware programs have the capability to collect personal and confidential information about a person or organization without the knowledge or informed consent of the user. After collecting this information from the computer, spyware then reports back to a third party. These programs range from annoying to dangerous; keyboard loggers and screen capture applications can steal passwords, credit card numbers, and personal information that can be used for identity theft. Spyware can be installed on your computers in the following ways:

- Bundled with shareware or freeware programs that can be downloaded from the Internet.
  - Automatically downloaded when users open or view unsolicited e-mail messages.
  - Installed through a “drive-by download” when a user visits a Web site and is prompted to accept a download, believing it is necessary in order to view the Web page.
  - Directly downloaded by a user who is persuaded that the technology offered is beneficial.
- Since Data Bank information is confidential and the information may not be disclosed to third parties, the Data Banks recommend the following practices to help you keep spyware out of your computers:
- Surf the Internet wisely and download information safely. Spyware can be downloaded without the user’s knowledge or permission. Download programs only from Web sites that you trust.
  - Keep your desktop operating system updated. Make sure that you have automatic updates turned on and that you download all the latest critical updates and security updates.
  - Make sure your Internet Explorer security setting for the Internet zone is set to Medium or High.
  - Install spyware protection to prevent pop-up windows; this will make it less likely that spyware will be downloaded inadvertently.
  - Use a firewall to prevent hackers from remotely placing spyware on your computer.
  - Read all security warnings, license agreements, and privacy statements associated with any software that you download.
  - Never click “agree” or “OK” to close a window. Instead, press the Alt and F4 buttons (simultaneously) on your keyboard to close a window. ¶

## Updated Interactive Training Data Bank Programs

**I**n September 2005, the Data Bank Interactive Training Programs unveiled a new look with updated content. The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) training programs are free, on-line training tools for helping queriers and reporters understand NPDB and HIPDB policy. To access the two interactive programs, click the Interactive Training link under the Quick List heading on the right side of the Web site home page, located at [www.npdb-hipdb.com](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com).

NPDB and HIPDB training programs answer the most frequently asked

questions and explain the reporting process for each Data Bank. An interactive quiz for each Data Bank describes more than 50 scenarios about medical malpractice payments, adverse license actions, adverse clinical privilege actions, adverse membership actions, exclusions, and health care-related judgment and convictions, and other adjudicated actions. These programs clearly identify which actions are reportable to the Data Bank(s) and why. At the bottom of both interactive training programs, users may click the Guidebook link to view and print various chapters of the NPDB and HIPDB Guidebooks.

All NPDB and HIPDB users are encouraged to use the training programs. New Data Bank users would benefit from viewing the interactive programs in order to learn about important Data Bank policies. More experienced Data Bank users may find the programs are a good refresher course and enjoy testing their policy knowledge through the interactive quizzes. The quizzes test a user’s ability to apply NPDB and HIPDB policies to real life scenarios. Give it a try and let us know what you think about the new look, scenarios, and information provided. ¶

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita... from page 1

A total of more than 33,000 health care professionals and volunteer relief personnel registered with HHS.

The volunteers were required to be licensed in at least one State and to have Hepatitis B and current Tetanus/Diphtheria immunizations for this assignment. (As temporary Federal employees a license in one State allows you to practice in any State within the scope of your Federal employment.) Prior to deployment they also received information regarding the austere "conditions of assignment." The health care professionals were advised that they were on a "30 Day Appointment." Approximately 900 practitioners served as non-paid, temporary, Federal employees and were deployed generally for 14 days or longer.

In addition to providing free queries on Federal volunteers, the Data Banks assisted State licensing boards that were accepting practitioners who had relocated to their State due to the disaster. This was done upon request and for a limited number of queries. In addition, one individual requested assistance with a self-query.

The Data Banks are recognized by government agencies as well as the private sector national accreditation organizations, as primary sources for the verification of certain credentials. Because multiple credentials can be verified with a single NPDB or HIPDB query, the Data Banks are a fast and efficient source for credentialing. During this public health emergency, the NPDB and HIPDB proved they could make a valuable contribution to the health care of our communities and our nation. ♣

## Dear Data Banks...

**T**his column answers questions you may have about Data Bank policy and procedures. **If you have a question about how the Data Banks work, please write to Dear Data Banks at P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832 or e-mail your question to Dear Data Banks at [npdb-hipdb@sra.com](mailto:npdb-hipdb@sra.com).** We look forward to hearing from you!

**Q**uestion: I am an agent for 42 hospitals and health plans. Will I need to renew the registration for each of these entities?

**Answer:** No. Each entity must renew its own registration. Agents may only renew their own registration: they are not authorized to renew registrations for the entities they represent. Each entity will be notified by first-class mail of the specific date for on-line renewal through the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS). Each entity will have 30 days to complete and submit the signed registration renewal to the Data Banks. The renewal process does not affect existing entity-agent relationships. For more information, see the *Fact Sheet on Registration Renewal*, available on-line at [www.npdb-hipdb.com/factsheet.html](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com/factsheet.html).

**Q**uestion: I recently submitted a query on a physician and received a query response indicating 0 reports. However, the practitioner says that her insurance company made a \$100,000 medical malpractice payment on her behalf in 2002. Why don't you have record of that report?

**Answer:** The Data Bank may not have had the report for several reasons: First, the query may not have contained adequate identification information to

match an existing report. Second, the payment may actually have been made for the benefit of a hospital or other health care entity even though the practitioner was involved in the case. Lastly, the entity making the payment may have failed to submit the required report. The Data Banks encourage you to inform the Customer Service Center (1-800-767-6732) of any potentially missing reports so we can determine if a reportable payment was not reported. The information will assist the Data Banks in efforts to improve the quality of health care and protect the public.

Each entity, including an insurance company that makes a payment under an insurance policy (self-insurance or otherwise) for the benefit of a physician, dentist or other health care practitioner, in settlement of or in satisfaction in whole or in part of, a claim or judgment against that practitioner, must report the payment information to the NPDB. However, a payment that is made as a result of a suit or claim solely against an entity (for example, a hospital, clinic, or group practice) and that does not identify an individual practitioner is not reportable under the NPDB's current regulations.

For additional information regarding medical malpractice payment reports, see Chapter E, page E-8 of the *NPDB Guidebook*, located on-line at [www.npdb-hipdb.com/npdbguidebook.html](http://www.npdb-hipdb.com/npdbguidebook.html).

**If you have an urgent question, please call the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732. Information Specialists are available to speak with you weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (5:30 p.m. on Fridays) Eastern Time. The Customer Service Center is closed on all Federal holidays.**

Data Bank Meeting Summaries from page 3

- A discussion on the pros and cons of offering free queries to medical and dental boards.
- A presentation by William B. Munier, M.D., Acting Director, Center for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, HHS, regarding the new legislation: *The Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005*.
- A presentation by Frank Stelling, Policy Manager, National Committee for Quality Assurance entitled: "NPDB Data: Use of Data from the Credentialer's Perspective." It was followed by a presentation illustrating NPDB data trends.
- Finally, the Committee discussed its role and responsibilities and provided direction for future meeting topics and logistics.

The next NPDB Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2006 in Arlington, VA. 🌿

## On the Horizon

### COMING SOON: THE DATA BANK WEB SITE ADDRESS WILL CHANGE!

Beginning on May 8, 2006, the Data Bank Web site will be located at [www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov](http://www.npdb-hipdb.hrsa.gov). The Data Banks are moving to a .gov domain name to help prevent fraud by showing Data Bank users that the NPDB-HIPDB Web site is under the Government-run domain. Beginning in May, please update your Internet bookmarks to reference the new .gov address for the Data Bank Web site! 🌿

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources & Services Administration  
Bureau of Health Professions  
Office of Workforce Evaluation and Quality Assurance  
Practitioner Data Banks Branch  
Parklawn Building, Room 8-103  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857